

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY EA:RHMILLER:AOA

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 160796

NODIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, APER, LA, US

SUBJECT: US-LAO RELATIONS

FOR CHARGE

1. AS WE HAVE STATED IN SEVERAL MESSAGES OVER THE PAST WEEKS, WE PLAN TO MAINTAIN A SMALL DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN VIENTIANE IF CONDITIONS PERMIT BUT WITHOUT PROVIDING ANY FURTHER MILITARY OR ECONOMIC AID. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SEE NO U.S. INTEREST TO BE SERVED BY SIMPLY PROVIDING A WHIPPING-BOY FOR THE PGNU. THIS IS WHY WE ASKED FOR YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT CLOSING THE POST AND WITHDRAWING ALL PERSONNEL IF AND WHEN YOU BELIEVE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT SUCH A MOVE(STATE 153540 AND 153541). WE ASSUME, IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH A RECOMMENDATION FROM YOU, THAT YOU BELIEVE U.S. INTERESTS CONTINUE TO BE SERVED BY STAYING AND PGNU HARASSMENT REMAINS WITHIN TOLERABLE LIMITS.

2. IN ANY CASE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT U.S. INTERESTS WILL

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BE SERVED AT PRESENT BY SENDING AN AMBASSADOR TO LAOS. WE

THEREFORE PLAN TO CONTINUE TO BE REPRESENTED BY A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. STONE WILL BE RE-ASSIGNED IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND THIS WILL BECOME KNOWN TO THE LAO IN DUE TIME. WE BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD ALSO BE

REPLACED SOON AND WE WOULD WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS YOU MAY HAVE AS TO TIMING. YOUR REASSIGNMENT AT THIS TIME IN NO WAY REFLECTS ADVERSELY ON YOU; ON THE CONTRARY, AS THE ACTING SECRETARY'S RECENT MESSAGE TO YOU INDICATED, YOU HAVE PERFORMED WELL OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS UNDER VERY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER, AS YOU YOURSELF SUGGEST IN VIENTIANE 4417, YOUR CAPITAL WITH SOUVANNA AND PHOUMI MAY BE LARGELY USED UP AND, PARTICULARLY IF WE DO NOT NOW SEND AN AMBASSADOR, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD HAVE NEW LEADERSHIP IN THE EMBASSY WITH NO ASSOCIATION WITH THE DIFFICULTIES OF MAY AND JUNE.

3. WE ASSUME THAT BY NOW THE PGNU HAS A PRETTY GOOD IDEA THAT U.S. AID IS A THING OF THE PAST, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NOT INFORMED THEM FORMALLY -- AND DO NOT INTEND TO DO SO -- THAT U.S. AID HAS BEEN TERMINATED. OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND WEEKS WE WILL BE OBLIGED TO TAKE A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC TERMINATING ACTIONS WHICH WILL BRING THIS HOME MORE CONCRETELY TO THE LAO: FORMAL TERMINATION OF AID PROCUREMENT, DISPOSITION OF ACCUMULATED GOODS IN BANGKOK, TERMINATION OF MAP AND AID TRAINEES IN CURRENT COURSES, ETC. MOREOVER, IT WILL BECOME CLEAR IN ONGOING FY 1976 AID HEARINGS THAT WE ARE NOT SEEKING PROGRAMS FOR LAOS. THE GENERAL IMPACT OF THESE STEPS ON THE LAO, IN ADDITION TO GROWING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, COULD PLACE ADDITIONAL STRAINS ON U.S.-LAO RELATIONS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE STILL DO NOT WISH TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DECISION ON THE DISPOSITION OF THE MAP ASSETS IN THAILAND. IF THE LAO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT, WE WILL DETERMINE HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF OUR RELATIONS AT THE TIME.

4. IF WE ARE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A POST IN VIENTIANE, IT WILL HAVE LITTLE FUNCTION BEYOND THAT OF SHOWING THE FLAG AND OF BEING A LISTENING POST. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES,  
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WE SEE NO NEED FOR KEEPING MORE THAN A MINIMAL STAFF. WE CAN APPRECIATE THAT YOUR PRESENT TRANSITIONAL WORKLOAD MAY TEMPORARILY REQUIRE BRINGING BACK TO VIENTIANE A FEW OF YOUR STAFF CURRENTLY IN THAILAND, ESPECIALLY ADMINISTRATIVE AND CONSULAR PERSONNEL, AND WE HAVE SENT SEPARATE AUTHORIZATION DESIGNED TO MEET YOUR NEEDS. HOWEVER, YOU -- AND YOUR SUCCESSOR -- SHOULD PLAN TO CONFIGURE THE MISSION TO A MINIMUM LIMIT (ABOUT 20) OVER THE NEXT TWO OR

THREE MONTHS. WE ENVISAGE PERMITTING DEPENDENTS TO RETURN -- WITH EMPHASIS ON WORKING WIVES TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE -- AS CONDITIONS PERMIT. WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES.

5. FINALLY, WITH RESPECT TO A PROTECTING POWER, WE HAVE IN MIND ASKING EITHER THE U.K. OR JAPAN (IN THAT ORDER OF PREFERENCE) TO UNDERTAKE THIS RESPONSIBILITY IF THE NEED ARISES, BUT WE DO NOT RPT NOT WISH TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH EITHER THE BRITISH OR THE JAPANESE UNTIL AND UNLESS WE ACTUALLY MAKE THE DECISION TO CLOSE THE POST AND WITHDRAW ALL PERSONNEL. WE REALIZE THIS POSES PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR YOU, BUT YOU SHOULD TAKE NO ACTION ON THE SUBJECT OF A PROTECTING POWER WITHOUT SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CAT-C  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 09 JUL 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** johnsorg  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975STATE160796  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** RHMILLER:AOA  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** P850038-1797, N750001-0718  
**From:** STATE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750772/aaaacmit.tel  
**Line Count:** 130  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ORIGIN NODS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** NODIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** johnsorg  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 JUL 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by johnsorg>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** US-LAO RELATIONS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PEPR, APER, LA, US  
**To:** VIENTIANE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006